

More U.S. citizens apprehended for moving drugs over border

PHOENIX (AP) — An increasing number of American citizens have been apprehended as they have tried to smuggle illegal drugs into the U.S. since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, an uptick that's come amid travel restrictions at the border with Mexico. For more than a year, the closure of the southern border to non-essential traffic has sharply limited the number of foreign citizens entering the U.S. by land. The rules have been extended until at least June 21, but Mexican authorities have allowed most U.S. citizens to walk or drive south across the border with relative ease. Law enforcement officials and drug trafficking experts say the border rules — put in place in April 2020 to curb the spread of the coronavirus — and their lopsided enforcement are driving the rise in U.S. citizens involved in borderland drug busts. Mexican traffickers, however, have long recruited Americans for the job. U.S. citizens were apprehended nearly seven times more often than Mex-



This undated photo provided by the U.S. Customs and Border Protection shows seized drug bundles containing 132 pounds of methamphetamine on display from Feb. 25, 2021, at the Laredo port of entry.

Associated Press

ican citizens between October 2020 and March 31 for trying to smuggle drugs in vehicles, U.S. Customs and Border Protection data

shows. In the 2018 and 2019 fiscal years, Americans were caught roughly twice as often as Mexicans. "As cross-border travel

shifted to essential travel only, criminal organizations shifted their operations as well," the agency said in a recent statement. It noted

it's increasingly seized drugs trafficked by U.S. citizens and by commercial trucks during the pandemic.

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Both groups are exempt from the restrictions at U.S. land borders.

Despite early pandemic disruptions to the global drug trade, illegal substances have since been pouring into the U.S. — the world's largest consumer of them. Customs and Border Protection says narcotics seizures along the U.S.-Mexico border have increased slightly in the 2021 fiscal year, while the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has said Mexican traffickers' ability to move drugs into the country had stayed "largely intact."

Most illegal drugs in the U.S., particularly narcotics, enter at the southern border. Americans are critical to these operations, trafficking experts say.

"The perception is that U.S. citizens are given less scrutiny by Border Patrol and CBP," said Michael Corbett, who worked at the Drug Enforcement Administration for 30 years and is now a narcotics expert witness. "Smuggling drugs is a risk management enterprise. They're looking for whatever methods they can come across to most safely and efficiently move drugs across the border."

Victor Manjarrez, a former Border Patrol sector chief in El Paso and Tucson, said "the use of American citizens kind of ebbs and flows. "Drug organizations ... are much more adept at changing than the government is," said Manjarrez, now a professor of border and national security at the University of Texas, El Paso. Customs and Border Protection figures show the agency seized nearly 92,000 pounds (41,730 kilograms) of drugs from vehicles at southern ports of entry between October 2020 and May.

U.S. citizens had been apprehended about 2,400 times by late March for



This undated photo provided by the U.S. Customs and Border Protection shows seized drug bundles containing 132 pounds of methamphetamine on display from Feb. 25, 2021, at the Laredo port of entry.

drug smuggling during inspections of vehicles crossing those checkpoints. In comparison, just 361 such apprehensions during the same period involved Mexican citizens, who are generally second — behind Americans — for drug trafficking arrests at ports of entry.

Arrests of U.S. citizens who bring drugs through in their bodies also have risen. In

the first four months of the 2021 fiscal year, 505 Americans were arrested with drugs concealed in their bodies at southern checkpoints, compared with just 35 people from all other countries during the same period.

Though illegal substances brought in by that type of courier represent just a fraction of the overall drugs crossing into the U.S., those

apprehensions in fiscal year 2018 were more balanced between U.S. citizens and non-citizens at 467 vs. 386, respectively, Customs and Border Protection data shows.

Apprehension numbers for U.S. and Mexican citizens caught driving drugs over the border in recent years also were not as far apart as this year — 1,693 vs. 793 in 2018 and 2,694 vs. 1,218 in 2019, respectively.

In many cases, drug couriers in the U.S. are recruited for one-off assignments to drive a shipment across the border in exchange for a lump sum payment based on how much product they are transporting, experts say. Yatziri Barbo-

za was one. In March, the 24-year-old from Houston was arrested after an X-ray and further inspection at a port of entry in Laredo, Texas, uncovered nearly 127 pounds (58 kilograms) of liquid methamphetamine concealed in the gas tank of the SUV she was driving, court documents said.

Barboza told law enforcement officials that she was to drive the shipment to an undisclosed location in Houston in exchange for \$10,000, according to a criminal complaint.

Mryna Montemayor, a public defender representing Barboza, did not respond to an email seeking comment. Similarly, 23-year-old Mike Mendoza, also of Houston, was arrested in February after border agents stopped him at the Juarez-Lincoln International Bridge in Laredo while driving a pickup truck with 132 pounds (60 kilograms) of meth stashed in its tires, according to a criminal complaint. Authorities estimate the street value of the drugs to be \$360,000.

Abundio Rene Cantu, a lawyer representing Mendoza, said he believes his client was offered a reward "in the thousands" of dollars. He denied knowing which Mexican criminal organization recruited Mendoza, who had been working in construction.

"This was not something he was regularly involved in," Cantu said of Mendoza, who pleaded guilty to a drug smuggling charge in March. "But generally speaking ... people sometimes may find themselves in a bind. And so they get caught up with somebody that knows somebody from a Mexican organization, and they offer the money to get involved into this type of activity."

Cantu estimates the number of cases he's handled of U.S. citizens facing drug smuggling charges has doubled since 2019. He largely credits the partial closure of the border.

"It's just opened up that opportunity to get new recruits," he said. "U.S. citizens ... people that are struggling financially that are going to be allowed to come in." □

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Biden honors war dead at Arlington, implores nation to heal

By CALVIN WOODWARD

Associated Press

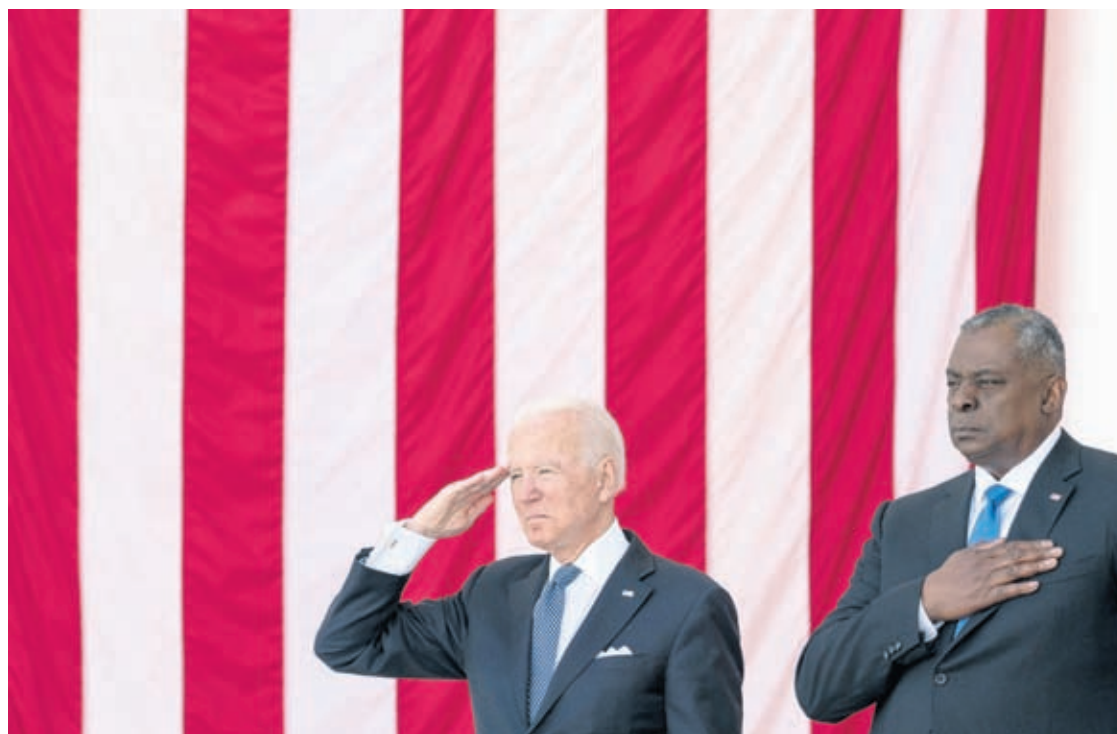
ARLINGTON, Va. (AP) —

President Joe Biden honored America's war dead at Arlington National Cemetery on Memorial Day by laying a wreath at the hallowed burial ground and extolling the sacrifices of the fallen for the pursuit of democracy, "the soul of America."

Biden invoked the iconic battles of history and joined them to the present as he implored Americans to rise above the divisions straining the union, which he described in stark terms.

The president was joined Monday by first lady Jill Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris and second gentleman Doug Emhoff in a somber ceremony at the Virginia cemetery's Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, which is dedicated to deceased service members whose remains have not been identified.

His face tight with emotion, Biden walked up to the wreath, cupping it in



President Joe Biden salutes as Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin places his hand over heart during the playing of "Taps," during the National Memorial Day Observance at the Memorial Amphitheater in Arlington National Cemetery, Monday, May 31, 2021, in Arlington, Va.

his hands in silent reflection, then making the sign of the cross. His eyes were wet. The gathered dignitaries and military families were hushed and solemn; the chattering of cicadas loud. In remarks that followed,

Biden called on Americans to commemorate their fallen heroes by remembering their fight for the nation's ideals.

"This nation was built on an idea," Biden said. "We were built on an idea, the idea

of liberty and opportunity for all. We've never fully realized that aspiration of our founders, but every generation has opened the door a little wider."

He focused much of his speech on the importance

of democracy, saying it thrives when citizens can vote, when there is a free press and when there are equal rights for all.

"Generation after generation of American heroes are signed up to be part of the fight because they understand the truth that lives in every American heart: that liberation, opportunity, justice are far more likely to come to pass in a democracy than in an autocracy," Biden said. "These Americans weren't fighting for dictators, they were fighting for democracy. They weren't fighting to exclude or to enslave, they were fighting to build and broaden and liberate."

But he suggested these ideals are imperiled.

"The soul of America is animated by the perennial battle between our worst instincts, which we've seen of late, and our better angels," he said. "Between Me First and We the People. Between greed and generosity, cruelty and kindness, captivity and freedom." □

Associated Press

White House asks court to Dismiss lawsuit over drug imports

By BOBBY CAINA CALVAN

Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) —

The Biden administration is urging a federal court to dismiss a lawsuit that could stand in the way of Florida and other states importing prescription drugs from Canada.

In a legal brief filed Friday, the White House argues that the lawsuit filed last year on behalf of U.S. pharmaceutical companies was premature because the federal government has yet to approve any importation programs.

The administration's legal filing came on the same day Florida's Republican governor, who is considering a run for the White House in 2024, called on the Biden administration to approve its drug importation application.

Florida and New Mexico are the only two states thus far to formally ask the U.S. government to allow feder-

ally approved drugs to be imported from Canada, arguing that doing so would save Americans millions of dollars. Other states are poised to follow, despite a lawsuit raising concerns over safety and costs that was filed by the Pharmaceutical Research & Manufacturers of America, the trade group that represents U.S. drug producers.

In its legal filing, President Joe Biden's administration argues that drug companies "pre-emptively launched this wholesale attack" on a program that has yet to be implemented. "Although two proposals have been submitted to FDA, no timeline exists for the agency to make a decision," the government's motion states.

During a Friday news conference, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said Floridians could save as much as \$150 million in drug costs in the program's first year.

DeSantis signed a bill in 2019 allowing prescription drugs to be imported from the neighboring country, but the plan awaits federal approval.

In November, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under then-President Donald Trump issued a ruling, which DeSantis said was based largely on Florida's plan, further opening the door for states to pursue importing prescription drugs. That same month, the trade group filed its lawsuit.

The governor's office on Friday issued a statement asserting that the current government's legal filing "puts the Biden Administration on the record in support of the FDA rule."

The Florida governor has increasingly taken a combative tone against the Biden administration as he positions himself as one of his party's leading critics of the current White House.



In this Saturday, May 8, 2021, file photo, Gov. Ron DeSantis, of Florida, watches the foursome matches during the Walker Cup golf tournament, in Juno Beach, Fla.

Associated Press

"It is disappointing that the FDA appears to have no timeline to review any state importation proposals as referenced in today's filing," the governor's statement said. "Floridians have been waiting long enough for lower drug prices, and there is no good reason to keep them waiting."

Some consumers have long crossed into Mexico and

Canada to buy medicine that sells for far less than in the United States. But it's against federal law to import drugs.

The lawsuit filed by the Pharmaceutical Research & Manufacturers of America accuses the federal government of failing to demonstrate the safety of importing medicine and any actual cost savings. □

Hundreds gather at historic Tulsa church's prayer wall

By **PETER SMITH**

TULSA, Okla. (AP) — Hundreds gathered Monday for an interfaith service dedicating a prayer wall outside historic Vernon African Methodist Episcopal Church in Tulsa's Greenwood neighborhood on the centennial of the first day of one of the deadliest racist massacres in the nation.

National civil rights leaders, including the Revs. Jesse Jackson and William Barber, joined multiple local faith leaders offering prayers and remarks outside the church that was under construction and largely destroyed when a white mob descended on the prosperous Black neighborhood in 1921, burning, killing, looting and leveling a 35-square-block area. Estimates of the death toll range from dozens to 300. Barber, a civil and economic rights activist, said he was "humbled even to stand on this holy ground."



Clergy and religious leaders hold their hands on a prayer wall outside of the historic Vernon African Methodist Episcopal Church in the Greenwood neighborhood during the centennial of the Tulsa Race Massacre, Monday, May 31, 2021, in Tulsa, Okla.

Associated Press

"You can kill the people but you cannot kill the voice of the blood."

Although the church was nearly destroyed in the massacre, parishioners

continued to meet in the basement, and it was rebuilt several years later, becoming a symbol of the resilience of Tulsa's Black community. The building

was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2018.

As the ceremony came to an end, participants put their hands on the prayer

wall along the side of the sanctuary while a soloist sung "Lift Every Voice and Sing." Traffic hummed on a nearby interstate that cuts through the Greenwood District, which was rebuilt after the massacre but slowly deteriorated 50 years later after homes were taken by eminent domain as part of urban renewal in the 1970s. Monday's slate of activities commemorating the massacre was supposed to culminate with a "Remember & Rise" headline event at nearby ONEOK Field, featuring Grammy-award-winning singer and songwriter John Legend and a keynote address from voting rights activist Stacey Abrams. But that event was scrapped late last week after an agreement couldn't be reached over monetary payments to three survivors of the deadly attack, a situation that highlighted broader debates over reparations for racial injustice. □

Amid grief, manhunt in Miami continues for 3 shooters



Law enforcement officials work the scene of a shooting outside a banquet hall near Hialeah, Fla., Sunday, May 30, 2021.

Associated Press

By **BOBBY CAINA CALVAN**
Associated Press

A manhunt continued into Memorial Day for three masked suspects who opened fire early Sunday morning outside a Miami banquet hall, killing two men and wounding 21 others, in a shooting authorities said had spread terror and grief through their communities.

That anguish was reinforced Monday by a griev-

ing father who interrupted a news conference just as the Miami-Dade Police Department's director, Alfredo "Freddy" Ramirez III, was decrying the weekend's gun violence and appealing for the community's help in tracking down the shooters.

"You killed my kid with no reason," the distraught man yelled out as he was escorted away from cameras. Police would later confirm

that the man, Clayton Dillard, is the father of one of two 26-year-old men who were gunned down outside the banquet hall that was hosting a rap concert. "That is the pain that you see. That is the pain that affects our community right there before you," Ramirez said.

On Monday, police released a snippet from surveillance video that showed a white SUV driving into an alley at the strip mall housing the El Mula Banquet Hall in northwest Miami-Dade, near Hialeah. The video shows three people getting out of the vehicle, one gripping a handgun, while the other two carried what police described as "assault-style rifles."

That's when the gunmen sprayed bullets indiscriminately into the crowd, even though police said the assailants had specific targets in mind.

Ramirez told the Miami Herald that the shooters

waited between 20 and 40 minutes before attacking shortly after midnight. Police said some in the crowd returned fire.

The video shows the three men returning moments later and driving off into the darkness. In all, 23 people were shot. In addition to the two fatalities, three others were in the hospital in critical condition. Because of privacy laws, police were not releasing the names of any of the victims.

The SUV used in the shooting was later found Monday submerged in a canal about 8 miles (13 kilometers) east of the banquet hall. Police said the vehicle was reported stolen two weeks ago.

Sunday's shooting came a little more than a day after a drive-by shooting claimed the life of one person outside another venue about 13 miles (about 21 kilometers) away in the Wynwood area.

Six others were injured. Some witnesses likened the

scene to a "war zone" after a barrage of dozens of bullets sent people scurrying in the night.

"This is a weekend when we should be out remembering, enjoying time with loved ones, and instead we're here mourning," Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava said at Monday's press conference.

"These despicable shootings in Northwest Miami-Dade and in Wynwood are shameful acts of violence that have left innocent people dead and injured," Cava said.

Police said the two shootings were unrelated. Police said Sunday's shooting appeared to stem from rivalries between two groups, but declined to refer to those groups as "gangs."

Businessman and TV personality Marcus Lemonis, star of "The Profit," pledged \$100,000 toward a reward fund to help authorities capture the suspects. □

Question for Denmark: Why could the U.S. allegedly eavesdrop?

By JAN M. OLSEN

Associated Press

COPENHAGEN, Denmark

(AP) — Several European nations want Denmark to explain why its foreign secret service allegedly helped the United States spy on European leaders, including German Chancellor Angela Merkel, more than seven years ago.

"We want the cards on the table," said Swedish Defense Minister Peter Hultqvist, adding it was "unacceptable to eavesdrop on allies."

Danish lawmaker Karsten Hoenge of the left-leaning Socialist People's Party, which is supporting Denmark's Social Democratic government, said Monday that he would quiz the Scandinavian country's defense and justice ministers in parliament about the case.

"The government must explain how come Denmark has been acting as a willing tool for a U.S. intelligence service, and what it will mean for cooperation with Denmark's neighboring countries," he said.

The Danish broadcaster DR said Sunday that the Danish Defense Intelligence Service, known in Denmark by its acronym FE, in 2014 conducted an internal in-



In this file photo dated Thursday, Sept. 7, 2017, Sweden's Defence Minister Peter Hultqvist looks on during a meeting of the EU ministers of defence in Tallinn, Estonia.

Associated Press

vestigation into whether the U.S. National Security Agency had used its cooperation with the Danes to spy against Denmark and neighboring countries.

The probe concluded that NSA had eavesdropped on political leaders and officials in Germany, France, Sweden and Norway.

Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg said it was "unacceptable if countries that have close allied

cooperation should feel the need to spy on each other or obtain information about them."

Spying on others "creates more mistrust than it creates collaboration. So, it's not a smart investment for the United States," she told the Norwegian broadcaster NRK.

According to DR, the alleged set-up between the United States and Denmark was codenamed "Opera-

tion Dunhammer." It reportedly allowed the NSA to obtain data by using the telephone numbers of politicians as search parameters. DR said its report was based on interviews with nine unnamed sources, all of whom were said to have had access to classified information held by the FE. The military agency allegedly helped the NSA from 2012 to 2014.

Merkel's spokesman, Stef-

fen Seibert, said Monday that "the German government has taken note of the reporting. It is in contact with all relevant national and international authorities for clarification."

Seibert said Merkel found out about the latest spying report as a result of questions from journalists.

Reports in 2013 that the NSA listened in on German government phones, including Merkel's, prompted a diplomatic spat between Berlin and Washington that soured otherwise good relations with Barack Obama's administration.

Merkel at the time declared that "spying among friends" was unacceptable. Still, there were also reports that Germany's own BND intelligence agency may have helped the U.S. spy on European companies and officials.

Former NSA contractor Edward Snowden, who revealed details of the secret U.S. eavesdropping programs in 2013, reacted to the DR report with a sarcastic tweet in Danish: "Oh, why didn't anyone warn us?"

In a written comment to DR, Danish Defense Minister Trine Bramsen said the government cannot discuss intelligence matters. □

Morocco says rift with Spain about 'broken' trust, respect

TARIK EL BARAKAH

Associated Press

RABAT, Morocco (AP) — In a deepening diplomatic rift with Spain, Morocco's Foreign Ministry said Mon-

day that the crisis between the two countries was "about trust and mutual respect, which has been broken," a far larger issue than the presence in Spain

of a rebel leader who is the enemy of the North African kingdom.

The especially sharp statement suggested that Rabat and Madrid are far from resolving an increasingly nasty spat that started when Brahim Ghali, who heads the Polisario Front and the self-declared Sahrawi Democratic Arab Republic, showed up at a Spanish hospital for treatment of COVID-19. He checked in under a false identity, carrying a diplomatic passport from Algeria.

The Polisario, based in southern Algeria, fights for independence of the Western Sahara, which Morocco annexed in the 1970s.

But resolving the issue of the Polisario leader won't solve the problem with Spain, Morocco said.

Ghali is making a virtual appearance in a Spanish court on Tuesday for alleged genocide allegations and other possible crimes that anti-Polisario groups accuse him of committing.

"The crisis is not related to a man's case. It does not start with his arrival nor does it end with his departure. First of all, it is about trust and mutual respect, which has been broken between Morocco and Spain," the ministry said.

The two countries are strategic partners, working closely to stem migration into Europe and on securi-

ty issues. The Spanish mainland is across a waterway from Morocco, but two Spanish enclaves in North Africa share borders with Morocco. The presence of Ghali, who arrived in Spain in mid-April, has been tied to a sudden surge of more than 8,000 migrants many of them unaccompanied minors who crossed the border to Ceuta, one of the enclaves.

Spain disagreed.

"If (Morocco) is saying that because of a foreign policy disagreement it stops respecting borders and allows a massive influx of migrants onto Spanish soil, that in my view is not acceptable," Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez said Monday. □



In this Feb. 27, 2021 file photo, Brahim Ghali, leader of the Polisario front, delivers a speech in a refugee camp near Tindouf, southern Algeria.

Associated Press

After Gaza war, Hamas chief calls for Israel prisoner swap

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP)

— Hamas's top leader in the Gaza Strip on Monday expressed optimism about reaching a prisoner exchange with Israel, while Egyptian mediators seek to hammer out a long-term cease-fire following an 11-day war in the Gaza Strip earlier this month.

Yehiyeh Sinwar spoke after meeting with Egyptian intelligence chief Abbas Kamel, who visited Gaza a day after talks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on a trip aimed at shoring up an informal cease-fire brokered by Cairo.

Sinwar said "there is a real chance to make progress" in indirect negotiations that could involve the release of Palestinian prisoners held by Israel, and the return of two Israeli citizens and the remains of two Israeli soldiers held by Hamas since the previous war in 2014.

Egypt often serves as a mediator between Israel and Hamas and was a key player in negotiating the cease-fire that ended the fighting. Kamel, who has not given public statements, is the



Yehiyeh Sinwar, left, the top Hamas leader in Gaza, and the head of the Egyptian General Intelligence Abbas Kamel, right, walk as they meet in Gaza Monday, May 31, 2021.

Associated Press

highest-ranking Arab official to visit Gaza since 2018. The war, which was halted by a cease-fire on May 21, was triggered by weeks of protests and clashes in Jerusalem over Israel's policing of a flashpoint holy site and efforts by settler groups to evict Palestinian families in the nearby Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood. The fight-

ing erupted May 10 when Hamas launched a barrage of rockets at Jerusalem.

It fired over 4,000 rockets toward Israeli cities during the fighting, while Israeli warplanes struck some 1,000 targets in Gaza. More than 250 people were killed, the vast majority of them Palestinians living in Hamas-ruled

Gaza, and parts of the territory suffered heavy damage.

"Today, by the grace of Allah, after this victory of May 2021, our Palestinian cause is making tangible and clear progress," Sinwar said.

Speaking to foreign reporters on Monday, Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz

said that any reconstruction of Gaza would depend on progress in the issue of returning captive Israelis held by Hamas.

"We are willing to help with fixing the area, rebuilding it, construction, etc. But it's conditioned with the return of our boys back home, the abducted soldiers," he said.

Gantz also said the rules have changed in Israel's dealings with Hamas and vowed a much harsher response to any violations of the new cease-fire.

"We will brutally retaliate, but we will do it in our own time and will not accept the previous reality to show itself again," he said.

Earlier on Monday, another senior Hamas official said Israel must halt its "aggression" in both Gaza and Jerusalem if it wants calm following this month's fighting in the Gaza Strip.

"We discussed several files, most importantly the necessity to oblige the occupation to stop its aggression on Gaza, Jerusalem, Sheikh Jarrah and all over Palestine," Khalil al-Haya told reporters. □

UNICEF says malnutrition spikes for Haiti kids amid pandemic

By PIERRE RICHARD LUXAMA and DÁNICA COTO
Associated Press

LES CAYES, Haiti (AP) — Severe acute childhood malnutrition is expected to more than double this year in Haiti as the country struggles with the coronavirus pandemic, a spike in violence and dwindling resources, a UNICEF report said Monday.

More than 86,000 children under age 5 could be affected, compared with 41,000 reported last year, said Jean Gough, UNICEF's regional director for Latin America and the Caribbean.

"I was saddened to see so many children suffering from malnutrition," she said after a weeklong visit to Haiti. "Some will not recover unless they receive treatment on time."

Severe acute malnutrition



Amazon Annegardine, 11, who is being treated for abnormal blood sugar levels, sits on a bed accompanied by her mother at the Hospital of Immaculate Conception, in Les Cayes, Haiti, Wednesday, May 26, 2021.

Associated Press

is considered a life-threatening condition.

In a slightly less dangerous category, acute malnutrition in kids younger than 5 in Haiti has risen 61%, with some 217,000 children expected to suffer from it

this year, compared with 134,000 last year.

Overall, UNICEF said, about 4.4 million of Haiti's more than 11 million inhabitants lack sufficient food, including 1.9 million children.

Gough told The Associ-

ated Press during a recent visit to a hospital in the southern city of Les Cayes that UNICEF has only a one-month supply left of a special food paste given to children in need and is seeking \$3 million by the end of June.

Officials said the pandemic also has disrupted health services, with childhood immunization rates dropping from 28% to 44%, depending on the vaccine. The decrease has led to a rise in diphtheria cases as health workers brace for an expected measles outbreak this year.

UNICEF noted that unvaccinated children also are more likely to die from malnutrition.

Lamir Samedi, a nurse who works at a community health center in the southern town of Saint-Jean-du-Sud, said the target was to

vaccinate 80% of children in the area, but they had yet to reach 50%.

Among the children hospitalized is 11-month-old Denise Joseph, who lay quietly in a crib in Les Cayes after being diagnosed with tuberculosis two weeks ago.

"She never eats," said her grandmother, Marie-Rose Emile, who is caring for the infant since her mother also is ill. Emile is struggling to provide for the baby, saying she has barely harvested any beans, corn or potatoes this year.

Gough, the UNICEF official, said she was discouraged by the dismal numbers of malnutrition and drop in childhood immunizations. She said more outreach services are needed because not enough people are visiting community health centers. □

Canada: Bodies at Indigenous school not isolated incident

TORONTO (AP) — Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said Monday it's not an isolated incident that over 200 children were found buried at a former Indigenous residential school.

Trudeau's comments come as Indigenous leaders are calling for an examination of every former residential school site — institutions that held children taken from families across the nation.

Chief Rosanne Casimir of the Tk'emlups te Secwepemc First Nation in British Columbia said the remains of 215 children, some as young as 3 years old, were confirmed this month with the help of ground-penetrating radar. She described the discovery as "an unthinkable loss that was spoken about but never documented" at the Kamloops Indian Residential School, the largest such school in the country.

"As Prime Minister, I am appalled by the shameful policy that stole Indigenous children from their communities," Trudeau said.

"Sadly, this is not an exception or an isolated incident," he said. "We're not going to hide from that. We have



The former Kamloops Indian Residential School is seen on Tk'emlups te Secwepemc First Nation in Kamloops, British Columbia, Canada on Thursday, May 27, 2021.

Associated Press

to acknowledge the truth. Residential schools were a reality - a tragedy that existed here, in our country, and we have to own up to it. Kids were taken from their families, returned damaged or not returned at all."

From the 19th century until the 1970s, more than 150,000 First Nations children were required to at-

tend state-funded Christian schools as part of a program to assimilate them into Canadian society. They were forced to convert to Christianity and not allowed to speak their native languages. Many were beaten and verbally abused, and up to 6,000 are said to have died.

The Canadian government apologized in Parliament

in 2008 and admitted that physical and sexual abuse in the schools was rampant. Many students recalled being beaten for speaking their native languages. They also lost touch with their parents and customs. Indigenous leaders have cited that legacy of abuse and isolation as the root cause of epidemic rates of alcoholism and drug ad-

diction on reservations.

Plans are underway to bring in forensics experts to identify and repatriate the remains of the children found buried on the Kamloops site.

Trudeau said he'll be talking to his ministers on Monday about further things his government needs to do to support survivors and the community. Flags at all federal buildings are at half-staff.

Opposition New Democrat leader Jagmeet Singh called Monday for an emergency debate in Parliament.

"This is not a surprise. This is a reality of residential schools," Singh said.

"215 Indigenous kids were found in an unmarked mass grave," he said. "Anytime we think about unmarked mass graves, we think about a distant country where a genocide has happened. This is not a distant country."

The Kamloops school operated between 1890 and 1969, when the federal government took over operations from the Catholic Church and operated it as a day school until it closed in 1978. □

Ethiopians protest U.S. sanctions over brutal Tigray war

By **RODNEY MUHUMUZA**

Associated Press

KAMPALA, Uganda (AP)

— Thousands of Ethiopians gathered in the nation's capital Sunday to protest outside pressure on the government over its brutal war in Tigray.

Protesters at the rally in Addis Ababa carried banners that criticized the United States and others in the international community who are voicing concern over atrocities in Tigray, where Ethiopian forces are hunting down the region's ousted and now-fugitive leaders. Troops from neighboring Eritrea are fighting in Tigray on the side of Ethiopian government forces, in defiance of international calls for their withdrawal.

But the protesters in Addis Ababa carried plac-

ards that said "Ethiopian young people denounce the western intervention." Others said Ethiopia's sovereignty was at stake.

The U.S. said last week it has started restricting visas for government and military officials of Ethiopia and Eritrea, who are seen as undermining efforts to resolve the fighting in Tigray, home to an estimated 6 million of Ethiopia's 110 million people. Besides the visa restrictions, Washington is imposing wide-ranging restrictions on economic and security assistance to Ethiopia.

Atrocities including brutal gang-rapes, extrajudicial killings and forced evictions have been part of the violence in Tigray, according to victims, witnesses, local authorities and aid groups.

Thousands of people are estimated to have died.

The Ethiopian government called the U.S. action "misguided" and "regrettable."

"The Ethiopian government will not be deterred by this unfortunate decision of the U.S. administration," said the statement tweeted by the ministry of foreign affairs.

"If such a resolve to meddle in our internal affairs and undermining the century-old bilateral ties continues unabated, the government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia will be forced to reassess its relations with the United States, which might have implications beyond our bilateral relationship," said the statement.

The crisis began in November after Ethiopia accused



Ethiopians protest against international pressure on the government over the conflict in Tigray, at a demonstration organised by the city mayor's office held at a stadium in the capital Addis Ababa, Ethiopia Sunday, May 30, 2021.

Associated Press

former leaders of the Tigray People's Liberation Front, or TPLF, of ordering an attack on an Ethiopian army base in the region.

Troops sent by Ethiopia's leader, Prime Minister Abiy

Ahmed, quickly ousted the TPLF from major cities and towns, but guerrilla fighting is still reported across Tigray. More than 2 million people have been displaced by the war. □

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Aruba becomes top winner of the 'European Search Awards 2021'

ORANJESTAD – The European Search Awards annually grants and celebrates the best companies and those working in the Pay Per Click (PPC) sector, Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Content Marketing thru an ample variety of business sectors which inspires innovation, creativity and connections thru digital platforms.

Since March 2021, the Aruba Tourism Authority and partner digital agency DEPT, received a notification which stated that Aruba has been nominated for the award of 'Best Use of Search – Travel/Leisure (SEO)' with the program "Organic Search Strategy during COVID-19 Pandemic". On May 27, 2021 during



the virtual ceremony A.T.A received the great news of Aruba & DEPT being the top winner of this award.

Our destination was nominated and competed against 3 other nominees; Etihad Airways (United Arab Emirates Airline), Aer Lingus (Ireland Airline) and Barceló Hotels. Search Engine Optimization is a process that helps improving the quality and quantity of traffic generated on websites and gathers its information from a system that detects how information is being

searched online. Aruba's strategy for the SEO process during the pandemic was an effort between the Aruba tourism office and different partners.

Jaap Ellis, A.T.A. Sales and Marketing Manager for the European market says; "It feels great to be granted such an award. There is a

great competition worldwide on the digital landscape of other destinations, airlines and hotel chains. They all have the same goal, being in constant contact with their clients. For A.T.A this is interacting with frequent visitors of Aruba or travelers who plan to visit Aruba in the future. This is why it's extremely important to develop and maintain a strategic plan. The plan was formulated and activated by a team of professionals of the Aruba Tourism Authority in Aruba and Europe. This

was jointly done with DEPT Digital Agency who is the partner of Search Engine Optimization (SEO), since the beginning of the Covid pandemic. The tourism office in Europe operated 5 sites online of aruba.com in 5 different languages and they will continue with the strategic plan of informing and attracting travelers who are in search of their next vacation destination."

Congratulations and Thank you to each and every one who contributed to this achievement. □

First tour operators and MICE & event planners to receive the Gold Seal

ORANJESTAD — The Aruba Tourism Authority (A.T.A) in partnership with different governmental bodies launched the Aruba Health and Happiness Code (HH Code) with the sole purpose of insuring our visitors a high level of standards in hygiene and health protocols.

Our tourism is picking up back bit by bit and for the tourism office it is extremely important for our local companies to provide the best service and products and to guarantee a safe vacation destination to our visitors. For the coming weeks the Aruba Tourism office will be conducting several inspections at tour operators that are registered for the Aruba Health & Happiness Code program in order to give them the Gold Seal. On Thursday June 3rd from 8 am to 11am there will be a drive thru and vehicle inspection in front of the A.T.A. office at L.G. Smith Boulevard 8,



in Oranjestad. All vehicle must comply with the rules and protocols that are required from them to be on the road.

A.T.A. would like to congratulate Kini Kini Tours and Transfers for being the first tour Company that managed to obtain their Gold Seal in the category of Bus & UTV/ATV.


Also partners of the Meetings Incentives Conferences & Events (MICE) will have the opportunity to receive their Gold Seal. This will be done thru an interview where they will

revise all protocols and verify that all protocols are stated in the companies procedure.

A.T.A. would like to congratulate the following MICE partners which received the Gold Seal: House of Mosaic, Ceremonies & Celebrations, Amsterdam Manor Beach Resort & MVC Eagle Beach and The Little One.

For more information on how to obtain the Gold Seal send and email to healthcode@aruba.com. □


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Article by Etnia Nativa

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Etnia Nativa is close to high rise Hotels



Shamans & their state of consciousness

Episode CVII - 107

NOORD — Ancient shamans have always modified the ordinary state of consciousness of their community. Clan leaders, special people whether male or female, there was no distinction, had the urge and responsibility to defend, protect, fix, save, repair, cure and obtain providence by the means of substances, meditation and observation in order to lead and teach.

Conscious altering rituals were practiced in all human societies and can be traced back to the Neolithic era rituals that also served as a bonding ceremony. Authentic visionaries are to be considered very essential in the legacy of man's physical evolution and as a spiritual being that is consciously transforming and evolving in to a creative being of righteousness and an open state of mind. By changing the ordinary state of consciousness we come into contact with a deeper part of existence. Through these experiences the shamans gain greater knowledge of practical things like where to go for hunting, foreseeing bad weather or for casting famine or advice to store food in anticipation of a meager harvest. With these practice the shamans could come into closer contact with the group or the soul of the animal to be hunted revealing it whereabouts and location. The shaman leads himself through ecstasy by experiencing a



different state of consciousness when entering into communion with the entire planet.

Human beings to be considered to lead a complex way of live. Here is precisely the greatest difficulty between modern human societies and shamanic practices when being confronted by this type of experience, since they are living constantly immersed in the material world. When the shaman reaches the desire state of consciousness to develop his spiritual journey, he must go through a tunnel that leads him to a parallel world in which he gains perspective into a specific need or reason. In this parallel world he is guided by his own higher inner part, which helps him discovers what is useful for the specific moment. In this way the practice of shamanic journeys where ancient means by which man explored the depths of existence. This age-old practice is the precursor to hypnosis and meditation.

Nature has made available a great variety of substances that allow us to enter particular states of consciousness. Aboriginal tribes of the Caribbean, Central and South America, including the Caquetian groups of



our islands, used to grind the seeds of the plant called Anadenantera Peregrina which they mixed together with other herbs and snails shells, which they cook over fire, adding the mixture into a container for its elaboration. In this way they obtain a fine powder, essentially hallucinogenic, that was inhaled or blown in the nostrils, either as a remedy, a cure or for spiritual trance called the hécura for the Yanomamis of the Amazon region. This sends him in to a trance like state which facilitates the interpretation of dreams or cryptic messages from the beyond. Tabaco smoke was a key element during these rituals, offerings blessings to open portals of earthly power. □

To get to know more over Aruba's and its origins, its animals and culture, we highly recommend you to book your visit for our renowned cultural encounter session has been entertaining curious participants for decades.

Mail us at etnianativa03@gmail.com to confirm your participation. Our facilities and activities take place close to high rise hotels.



Sour Grass Showcasing Nine Caribbean Artists at the Atlantic World Art Fair

BRIDGETOWN — Holly Bynoe and Annalee Davis of Sour Grass have invited a group of nine contemporary visual artists from across the wider Caribbean region for their dynamic contribution to the virtual Atlantic World Art Fair (AWAF) hosted by Artsy—the leading marketplace to discover, buy, and sell fine art. Running from June 1st until the 21st, this is the first time this global powerhouse will be focusing on artists from the Caribbean. Sour Grass's booth will exhibit 36 works including paintings, prints, photographs, videos and mixed media works, with a varied price range produced by artists who are nationals of, or reside in Aruba, Barbados, Curaçao, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Guadeloupe, St. Maarten, Trinidad & Tobago and the diaspora.

This inaugural transnational col-

laboration, coordinated by the Bermuda-based Black Pony Gallery, will facilitate Sour Grass in growing its art communities while showcasing an under-represented, dynamic region of innovation. Engaging with Artsy's international platform will rapidly expand the visibility and awareness of cultural production emanating from and concerned with the Caribbean's position within the global geopolitical framework.

Sour Grass will contribute to the larger AWAFF public programme through several live conversations, fostering a deeper understanding of the contemporary art market in the region. The panel on Friday, June 4th at 11 am EST in collaboration with Suzie Wong Presents (Jamaica) and TERN Gallery (The Bahamas) is titled 'Artists in Dialogue: Moving in, through, and across Landscapes, Waters, and Memo-

ries.' Four guest artists will address the intersections in their work and speak about how complex histories, places, colonisation, nature, and spirituality have influenced their practices. The artists are La-Vaughn Belle (USVI), Edouard Duval Carrie (Haiti/USA), Deborah Jack (St. Martin/USA), and Tessa Whitehead (The Bahamas).

On Wednesday, June 16th at 11 am EST Sour Grass will present "Live from the Studio", a conversation between two Dominican LGBTQIA+ artists Eliazar Ortiz and Franz Caba. Moderated by Dr. Ian Bethell-Bennett (The University of The Bahamas), these two artists will give a tour of their working spaces, share ongoing glimpses into their processes, and introduce their themes which including addressing the queer body present in their practices.

Sour Grass welcomes the following artists - Franz Caba (Dominican Republic), Ronald Cyrille (Dominica/Guadeloupe), Deborah Jack (St. Martin/USA), Abigail Hadeed (Trinidad & Tobago), Katherine Kennedy (Barbados), Lisandro Suriel (St. Martin), Joiri Minaya (Dominican Republic/USA), Eliazar Ortiz (Dominican Republic), and Samuel Sarmiento (Venezuela/Aruba) to the Sour Grass Artsy booth.

Sour Grass is a curatorial agency



founded by Holly Bynoe and Annalee Davis in 2020. This venture seeks to work with artists and creative practitioners from the Caribbean and across its diaspora, to build relationships with museums, cultural institutions, collectors, publishers, biennales, and both private and public entities.

To view the Sour Grass booth on Artsy: <https://www.artsy.net/show/sour-grass-sour-grass-at-atlantic-world-art-fair-2021>

To learn more about building an art collection and ways to support artists in the Atlantic region, please follow the Atlantic World Art Fair on Artsy.

Follow Samuel Sarmiento of Aruba on his Instagram page [instagram.com/samuelsarmientostudio/](https://www.instagram.com/samuelsarmientostudio/).



Can I have a ..., please?

ORANJESTAD — Want to taste something different for a change?? How about a different breakfast from what you are used to at your hotel. Hop in your car, drive around and anywhere around the island you will come across a local snack shop.

Here you will find all types of snacks loved by the locals. Try a pastechi, a Caribbean pastry filled with cheese or meat and fried up deliciously. Or perhaps you might want to try a croquette, a crusty little meat ball. A dedito is also a good option, it's a stick made out of cheese or hotdog. If you want to try something more familiar go for a home-made hamburger or a ham and cheese toast, but with a local touch. All these snacks are ridiculously addictive. Freshen up with a delicious fruit shake (batido) made out of watermelon, strawberry, banana, papaya or just mix any fruit together. What makes these little snack shops more attractive is the warmth of its people and with the smile you are being served.☐



Fruit Loose & Veggie Boost

Fresh fruits make a tropical holiday's picture complete. Whether you see the mango's hanging in the trees or the fresh fruit cocktail on the side table of your pool bed, the link is there: you are in the tropics. Aruba grows her own fruits and veggies and there are some pretty out-of-space local species you may never had heard of, but really healthy and delicious.

Mispel

This is a fruit with a character (5-10 cm/2-4 inches). It does not ripe until it is picked or falls off the tree. Mispel is hard with a sandpaper like texture when immature, soft and juicy when ripe. It's technically a berry, but contains a skin similar to that of a kiwi. It's grainy and sweet, with a light, musky flavor. The sap or gum from the tree is also a source of 'chicle' the original ingredient used to make chewing gum. Rich in tannins, antioxidants shown to contain anti-inflammatory compounds, and vitamin C, essential for healthy immune function. Season: year- round. When it comes to veggies the island certainly of-

fers a home-grown selection. They taste delicious and have their specific talents to boost your immune system. Start the day with a 'batida' (smoothie) enriched with a local veggie touch or select your restaurant that offers local vegetable dishes to get the real pure taste of it.

Konkomber chiquito

This is a sort of local squash, but looks like a cucumber with prickly skin. The taste however is bitterer than the cucumber and the vegetable is smaller in size but bigger in width. Inside is a soft, fleshy pulp and seeds, just like the cucumber. Konkomber chiquito is grown in the island and used in salads and 'stoba' (stew) or on its own in vinegar. The veggie contains multiple B vitamins, including vitamin B1, vitamin B5, and vitamin B7 (biotin). B vitamins are known to help ease feelings of anxiety and buffer some of the damaging effects of stress. Additionally this veggie is rich in two of the most basic elements needed for healthy digestion: water and fiber. Season: year- round.☐

4 tips for small-business owners paying down pandemic debt

By **KELSEY SHEEHY** of Nerd-Wallet

After more than a year of navigating lockdowns, mandates and COVID-19 protocols, small-business owners are starting to see a light at the end of the tunnel. But the debt many needed to take on to weather the pandemic still casts an ominous shadow. In 2020, 79% of small employer firms (up to 499 employees) reported having outstanding debt, up from 71% in 2019, according to a February 2021 report by the Federal Reserve Banks. Of the firms that applied for financing, 58% said they did so to cover operating expenses like rent and payroll, compared with 43% in 2019.

Paying down this pandemic debt can help business owners rebuild their companies. The following tips can help you eliminate your business debt faster, while saving money on costly interest in the process.

1. CREATE A DEBT REPAYMENT TIMELINE

Being strategic about your debt will help you pay it off more quickly, says Chris Woods, founder of LifePoint Financial Group, a financial planning firm in Alexandria, Virginia.



In this May 12, 2020 file photo, a pedestrian passes a closed barbershop during the coronavirus pandemic, in the North End neighborhood of Boston.

Associated Press

"People tend to just throw money at (debt). Maybe they'll pay a little bit extra this month or that month," Woods says. The better approach? Create a detailed repayment plan.

Take a full accounting of what you owe, including interest rates and repayment terms for any business loans or credit card debt you've accumulated. Note grace periods, deadlines and action items, such as applying

for forgiveness if you received a Paycheck Protection Program loan.

Then, set a reasonable (read: achievable) timeline to pay off your debts and start picking them off one by one. If you're juggling multiple loans or credit cards, funnel any extra payments to the debt with the highest interest rate, says Zach Reece, owner and chief operating officer of Colony Roofers in

Atlanta. "This is your most expensive debt and you'll get the highest cost savings from paying this debt down most aggressively," notes Reece, who is also a certified public accountant.

2. FIND OPPORTUNITIES TO CUT EXPENSES, INCREASE REVENUE

"You can't pay down debt with money you don't have," Reece says.

There are two ways to find more money: Trim your

budget or boost your income. To jumpstart your revenue, reexamine your business model and look for opportunities to reach more customers or expand your sales footprint. You can also take steps to front-load your cash flow. Renegotiate contracts to request payment upfront or offer incentives to customers who can pay six or 12 months in advance.

To cut expenses, scrutinize your budget. Look at things like advertising, subscriptions, professional memberships and even office space. What can you cancel, pause or downsize?

"Operating leaner will help you buffer downturns and create more cash flow so you have space to pay down that debt," says Ken Alozie, managing director of Greenwood Capital Advisors in Washington, D.C.

3. CONSIDER REFINANCING, CONSOLIDATING

Make your debt less expensive by refinancing. Depending on your loan and business history, you may be able to access a better rate, a lower monthly payment or more favorable repayment terms. The same applies for any business credit card debt you accrued, Woods says. □

Postal Service looks to raise first-class stamp to 58 cents

By **ASHRAF KHALIL**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. Postal Service wants to raise rates on first-class stamps from 55 cents to 58 cents as part of a host of price hikes and service changes designed to reduce debt for the beleaguered agency.

The request for the changes, which would take effect Aug. 29, was filed with the Postal Regulatory Commission. It includes price hikes for first-class mail, magazines and marketing mailers. The price hikes are part of Postmaster General Louis DeJoy's 10-year plan for the agency, which faces an estimated \$160 billion in operating losses over the next

decade.

DeJoy said the increases are necessary to "achieve financial sustainability and service excellence" and will allow the postal service to "remain viable and competitive and offer reliable postal services that are among the most affordable in the world."

The Washington Post reported that the price hikes also are being accompanied by hundreds of layoffs of "management-level employees." An email to postal officials seeking confirmation of the layoffs did not receive an immediate response.

The Post Office has grappled with declining revenues for years; in the past decade, overall mail

volume has dropped 28 percent, and first-class letters have declined by 47 percent, according to the agency. It also faces fierce competition in the package delivery business from FedEx, UPS and Amazon.

DeJoy, a major donor to former president Donald Trump, became a figure of national controversy last year when he was publicly accused by Democrats of hampering mail service for political reasons. His attempted service cuts were seen as an extension of Trump's opposition to mail-in voting.

After Trump's defeat, DeJoy's position was considered to be in jeopardy. The Senate has approved three new appointees to



A stamp is shown on an envelope Friday, May 28, 2021, in Washington.

Associated Press

the Postal Service's governing board, giving the nine-member board a Democratic majority. However, DeJoy's dismissal is not certain. Postal Ser-

vice board Chairman Ron Bloom, a Democrat, told House lawmakers in February that DeJoy "in very difficult circumstances is doing a good job." □

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Leave
- 7 Second gentleman Emhoff
- 11 Mideast region
- 12 Different
- 13 Piece of gymnastics equipment
- 15 Cousin of culottes
- 16 Bakery buys
- 18 Capital of Italia
- 21 Minnow's home
- 22 Team spirit
- 24 Unoriginal
- 25 Singer Tillis
- 26 Raucous bird
- 27 James Clavell book
- 29 Igloo shape
- 30 Harvest
- 31 Flying: Prefix
- 32 Brooch part
- 34 Piece of gymnastics equipment
- 40 Diva's piece
- 41 Redirected route
- 42 College bigwig
- 43 Solution

DOWN

- 1 Bit of ointment
- 2 Memorable period
- 3 Crony
- 4 Humbled
- 5 Skating spots
- 6 Folded food
- 7 One in the red
- 8 Bullfight call
- 9 Mex. neighbor
- 10 Ring feature
- 14 Flynn of films
- 16 From the Arctic
- 17 Small movie

P	A	P	A	S		I	S	A	A	C
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L	E	T	M	E		O	X	I	D	E
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D	O	U	B	L	O	O	N			
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			S	H	A	M	B	L	E	S
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I	B	I	Z	A		D	A	T	E	D
F	E	V	E	R		I	N	A	W	E
F	L	E	E	S		A	S	P	E	N

Yesterday's answer

- 19 College study
- 20 Texas mission
- 21 Poker prize
- 22 Chess pieces
- 23 Needle feature
- 25 Syrup choice
- 28 Arcade muncher
- 29 Train stops
- 31 Pallid
- 33 Alan of "M*A*S*H"
- 34 Spot to jot
- 35 Vein makeup
- 36 Soccer's Hamm
- 37 Join the crew
- 38 Take to court
- 39 Go wrong

1	2	3	4	5	6		7	8	9	10
11							12			
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34	35	36						37	38	39
40						41				
42						43				

6-1

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's. X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

6-1

CRYPTOQUOTE

MR MO NTL CJVKHB ETN AHSE

AXI GJ CTLJ MK NJ XVJ

XBNXIO CTMLF. — RETAXO

YJKKJVO TL

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: WHEN THE GODS WISH TO PUNISH US, THEY MAKE US BELIEVE OUR OWN ADVERTISING. — DANIEL BOORSTIN



A police officer works inside the operation center at the village of Nea Vyssa near the Greek - Turkish border, Greece, Friday, May 21, 2021.

Associated Press

In post-pandemic Europe, migrants will face digital fortress

By DEREK GATOPOULOS and COSTAS KANTOURIS
PEPLO, Greece (AP) —

As the world begins to travel again, Europe is sending migrants a loud message: Stay away!

Greek border police are firing bursts of deafening noise from an armored truck over the frontier into Turkey. Mounted on the vehicle, the long-range acoustic device, or "sound cannon," is the size of a small TV set but can match the volume of a jet engine. It's part of a vast array of physical and experimental new digital barriers being installed and tested during the quiet months of the coronavirus pandemic at the 200-kilometer (125-mile) Greek border with Turkey to stop people entering the European Union illegally.

A new steel wall, similar to recent construction on the U.S.-Mexico border, blocks commonly-used crossing points along the Evros River that separates the two countries.

Nearby observation towers are being fitted with long-range cameras, night vision, and multiple sensors. The data will be sent to control centers to flag suspicious movement using artificial intelligence analysis.

"We will have a clear 'pre-

border' picture of what's happening," Police Maj. Dimonsthenis Kamargios, head of the region's border guard authority, told the Associated Press.

The EU has poured 3 billion euros (\$3.7 billion) into security tech research following the refugee crisis in 2015-16, when more than 1 million people — many escaping wars in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan — fled to Greece and on to other EU countries.

The automated surveillance network being built on the Greek-Turkish border is aimed at detecting migrants early and deterring them from crossing, with river and land patrols using searchlights and long-range acoustic devices.

Key elements of the network will be launched by the end of the year, Kamargios said. "Our task is to prevent migrants from entering the country illegally. We need modern equipment and tools to do that."

Researchers at universities around Europe, working with private firms, have developed futuristic surveillance and verification technology, and tested more than a dozen projects at Greek borders.

AI-powered lie detectors and virtual border-guard interview bots have been

piloted, as well as efforts to integrate satellite data with footage from drones on land, air, sea and underwater. Palm scanners record the unique vein pattern in a person's hand to use as a biometric identifier, and the makers of live camera reconstruction technology promise to erase foliage virtually, exposing people hiding near border areas. Testing has also been conducted in Hungary, Latvia and elsewhere along the eastern EU perimeter.

The more aggressive migration strategy has been advanced by European policymakers over the past five years, funding deals with Mediterranean countries outside the bloc to hold migrants back and transforming the EU border protection agency, Frontex, from a coordination mechanism to a full-fledged multinational security force.

But regional migration deals have left the EU exposed to political pressure from neighbors.

Earlier this month, several thousand migrants crossed from Morocco into the Spanish enclave of Ceuta in a single day, prompting Spain to deploy the army. A similar crisis unfolded on the Greek-Turkish border and lasted three weeks last year. □

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Lawrence Block's memoir recalls a colorful writing career

By HILLEL ITALIE

NEW YORK (AP) — Lawrence Block has followed many paths during his long career.

"With not a few dead end roads among them," notes the mystery novelist.

Best known for his Matthew Scudder and Bernie Rhodenbarr series, Block has released dozens of popular works through Harper Collins and Dutton among other mainstream publishers. He has received multiple Edgar Awards and Anthony Awards for outstanding fiction, and his lifetime achievement honors include the Diamond Dagger from the British Crime Writers' Association and Grand Master status in the Mystery Writers of America. But he has also completed dozens of works under other names, by publishers and publications long since forgotten, and, in some cases, of questionable legality. More recently, he has been publishing the books himself, including "Dead Girl Blues" and the Rhodenbarr novel "The Burglar In Short Order," which both came out in 2020, and his current work, the memoir "A Writer Prepares."

"One big plus of self-publishing is how quickly it can be managed. I can reduce waiting time by a minimum of a year if I publish something myself," he explains. "The downside is not to be shrugged off. Self-published books rarely get reviewed and hardly ever show up in bookstores. 'Dead Girl Blues' didn't make me rich, and neither will 'A Writer Prepares.'"



Author Lawrence Block poses for a photo to promote his memoir, "A Writer Prepares," in the West Village section of New York on Friday, May 21, 2021. Associated Press

But nothing I write is going to do that, no matter who publishes it, and whatever I self-publish stays forever available in electronic and print editions, and probably finds whatever audience it deserves to have."

Block is a longtime Greenwich Village resident, fully vaccinated and back outside, enjoying a nice big plate of Brussels sprouts during a recent afternoon interview at a favorite cafe. Passersby and fellow diners do not seem to notice anything special about this bald, plainly dressed man with the graveled voice, though at least some likely know about his books.

"A Writer Prepares" is a bit of unfinished business for Block, who turns 83 this summer and first worked on the memoir in the 1990s, during "a positively feverish week" at an Illinois artist retreat. But he had other projects at the time and left the memoir in a manila envelope in a closet near his desk. When he came upon the manuscript last year, he gave it another look and was pleased by what he saw.

In "A Writer Prepares," Block looks back to his childhood in Buffalo, New York, when he was his own biggest skeptic. In 11th grade English, he was assigned a pa-

per on what his future profession might be. His theme was "uncertainty," he recalled. He confided that he would never fulfill his father's dream for him to become a doctor, and that an early wish to be a garbage man ended when his mother told him the work would chap his hands.

He ended the piece with a disclaimer: "On reading over this composition, one thing becomes clear. I can never be a writer." Responded his teacher, Miss Jepsen, who gave him an A: "I wouldn't be too sure of that."

Block attended Antioch College, the setting for his extra-pulpy novel "Campus Tramp," but never graduated and eventually settled in New York. Ambitious and prolific, he would take on the kind of assignments not generally discussed at the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop or offered by the Paris Review.

Before "Lawrence Block" became a publishing brand, he was introduced to readers as Anne Campbell Clark, or Chip Harrison, or Jill Emerson, or Sheldon Lord. He wrote erotica and lesbian novels, called himself Dr. Benjamin Morse as he completed "Sexual Surrender in Women," and, as John Warren Wells, turned

out a bit of field research titled "Tricks of the Trade: A Hooker's Handbook." He wrote for magazines that would cut his stories, change the title or rename a character. He might submit a story under one pen name and discover it was changed to another.

"A Writer Prepares" captures a pre-Internet, pre-superstore business that included such publications as Manhunt, Trapped and Keyhole, and some institutions that only the most cynical writer would have imagined on his own. Block worked briefly as a copy reader for the Scott Meredith Literary Agency, whose founder was as elusive as the ethics of his company.

"Every letter we wrote was designed to manipulate, and was dashed off with a cavalier disregard for the truth," Block writes. "My fee reports applauded the talent of writers who showed no talent, condemned the plots of stories with perfectly satisfactory plots, and were written with the singular goal of getting the poor mooch to submit another story and pony up another fee."

When Meredith died, Block recalls during his interview, fellow author Evan Hunter called up friends and exclaimed, "Isn't that wonder-

ful, Scott's dead?! Isn't that the best thing you've ever heard?!"

Block's memoir captures New York in the late 1950s-early 1960s, when it was both stimulating and affordable, enabling a young writer to start a family there. The city has long been part of his work. Some readers think of "Eight Million Ways to Die," perhaps his most famous Scudder novel, as one of the great books about New York. Matthew Scudder lives in downtown Manhattan, but his cases bring him all around the city, to homes honest citizens would be advised not to visit.

"I like to get around the city," Block says. "Up until the pandemic, my wife and I would have a thing: On Sundays, we'd research a little and we'd find some ethnic restaurant in some outer-borough neighborhood we had no acquaintance with and figure out how to get there. It was a great once-a-week treat." His memoir leads to the mid-1960s, to what he calls the end of his "apprenticeship," the publication of his novel "The Thief Who Couldn't Sleep." It was the start of his breakthrough Evan Tanner mystery series, about a Korean War veteran who because of his injuries is afflicted with permanent insomnia. Block calls it the first book only he could have written, a break from the "derivative work" of his early years and the start of the kinds of novels he knew he was meant to write.

"The stakes are higher (in a mystery novel) than they are in a novel where the big plot point is, 'Will this professor gets tenure?'" he says with a smile.

He cites a writer friend who's "a heavy-duty reader. And she's got a book that she's reading and she always reads herself to sleep at night. And for ages the book she settles in bed with has to be a mystery because at that point in the day, she says, she has to be reading something that she knows will be resolved at the end — which I found interesting." □

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Healthier Suns, hurting Lakers make for 1st-round intrigue

By DAVID BRANDT

PHOENIX (AP) — Chris Paul is feeling better and looking much more like the “Point God” that’s helped make the Suns one of the NBA’s best teams this season.

Anthony Davis is hurting and it’s unclear if the Lakers star forward will be available for a crucial Game 5 on Tuesday night in Phoenix.

The Suns-Lakers series has lived up to the hype as one of the most intriguing matchups of the first round of the NBA playoffs. But instead of focusing on the stars on the floor, the chess match between Suns coach Monty Williams and Lakers coach Frank Vogel is having a bigger impact than expected.

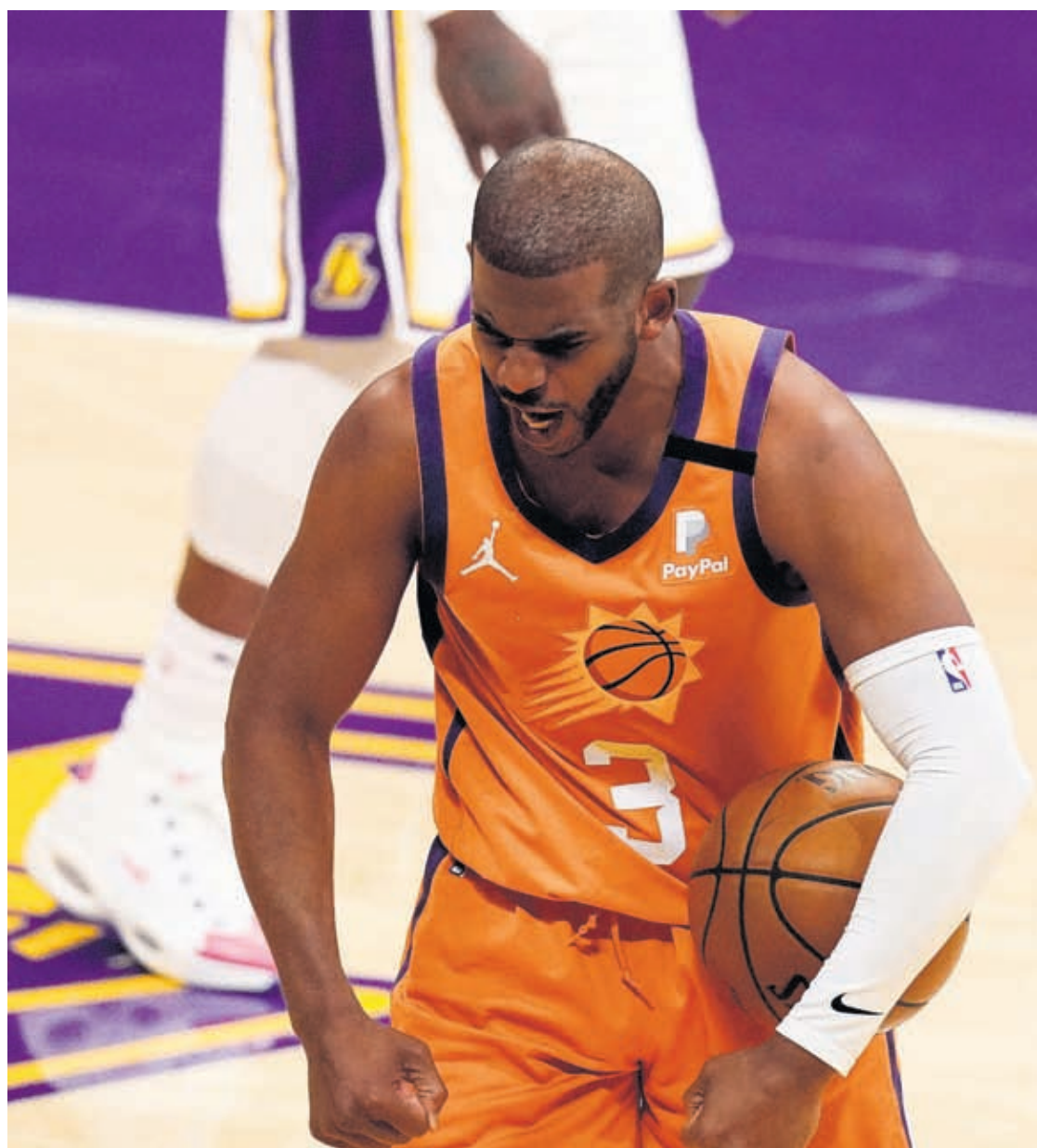
“It’s a roller coaster,” Williams said. “When you’re in the playoffs, and you have time in between games, you can’t even imagine the thought processes that go into what your rotation is going to be like, how it’s going to affect the team, making the right decision on who to fill those minutes for that particular player. There’s a lot that goes on. “We just don’t take health for granted.”

Coming into the series, the Suns were relying on an All-Star backcourt of Paul and Devin Booker while the Lakers countered with All-Stars LeBron James and Davis. But Paul hurt his shoulder in Game 1 and was obviously limited for the next two games. Only on Sunday in Game 4 did the 36-year-old start to look like himself, scoring 18 points and dishing nine assists in an 100-92 win in LA. Other Suns players — like Cameron Payne and Deandre Ayton — have had to step up.

For the Lakers, Davis didn’t return in the second half because of a left groin strain. If he can’t go in Game 5, it will be up to others like Kyle Kuzma, Andre Drummond and Marc Gasol to pick up the slack.

Of course, there’s always the chance that LeBron could just will the Lakers to victory, as he’s done so many times in his career.

“It’s next man up, and obvi-



Phoenix Suns guard Chris Paul celebrates after forcing a turnover during the second half in Game 4 of an NBA basketball first-round playoff series against the Los Angeles Lakers Sunday, May 30, 2021, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

ously if (Davis) is not ready for Game 5, it’s going to be a tough boat for our ballclub, but it’s next man up, and we’re going to have to be that way in a hostile environment,” James said. The Trail Blazers and Nuggets also have a crucial Game 5 on Tuesday in Denver.

It was the outside shooting of Norman Powell, not Damian Lillard, that led the way to Portland’s 115-95 victory over Denver in Game 4. Powell, a shooting guard/small forward the Blazers acquired in a March trade with Toronto, erupted for 29 points to send the series back to the Mile High City tied.

Nuggets coach Michael Malone called his team out for their lackadaisical play — especially a starting group led by MVP finalist Nikola Jokic.

“I thought we had some

guys that were tentative, that looked a little scared and that we played soft,” Malone said after the game. “Maybe this will be a wake-up call for our starting group. Good things happen when you play hard.”

Tuesday’s games:

LAKERS AT SUNS

Tied at 2-2. Game 5, 10 p.m. EDT, TNT.

— **NEED TO KNOW:** The series has been seriously altered by injuries to Paul (shoulder) and Davis (groin), and both teams have had to adjust lineups and strategies accordingly. Paul looks like he’s getting close to full health — he had 18 points and nine assists in Game 4 — while it remains to be seen if Davis is available for Game 5.

— **KEEP AN EYE ON:** Ayton has played some of the best basketball of his young career during this series.

The No. 1 overall draft pick in 2018 is averaging 19.8 points and 13.5 rebounds per game while anchoring a Suns defense that’s held its own against a much bigger Lakers team.

— **INJURY WATCH:** All eyes are on Davis. If he plays, it might not be at 100%. If he doesn’t play, James and the supporting cast will have to pick up the slack.

— **PRESSURE IS ON:** Lakers. The Suns reclaimed home-court advantage after beating the Lakers 100-92 on Sunday in Los Angeles. If Phoenix can win its final two home games of the series, it’ll move on to the second round.

TRAIL BLAZERS AT NUGGETS
Tied at 2-2. Game 5, 9 p.m. EDT, NBATV.

— **NEED TO KNOW:** The Trail Blazers seized the series momentum in Game 4 with a dominant 115-95 win. The most surpris-

ing part was that Portland got just 10 points from star guard Damian Lillard, who shot 1 of 10 from the field. Malone wasn’t happy with his team’s effort in the aftermath, saying some of his guys “played soft.”

— **KEEP AN EYE ON:** Powell. He was fantastic in Game 4, scoring 29 points on 11-of-15 shooting. When the Trail Blazers get plenty of help for star guards Lillard and CJ McCollum, they’re a tough team to beat.

— **INJURY WATCH:** The Nuggets continue to work through life without G Jamal Murray, who hurt his knee and was lost for the year late in the regular season. Denver has received solid production from backup Facundo Campazzo, who is averaging 10.8 points and 6.5 assists in the series.

— **PRESSURE IS ON:** It’s pretty even, but the Nuggets are coming off a loss and need to regain momentum at home.

CELTICS AT NETS

Nets lead 3-1, Game 5, 7:30 p.m. ET, TNT.

— **NEED TO KNOW:** The Nets’ Big Three of Kevin Durant, James Harden and Kyrie Irving looks like it’s rounding into form at the right time. Durant is averaging 34.8 points, Harden is scoring 26.3 points and dishing 10.8 assists while Irving is adding 24.8 points. If they stay healthy and keep playing like that, they’ll be a tough out for the Celtics or anyone else in these playoffs.

— **KEEP AN EYE ON:** Celtics F Jayson Tatum. Probably the only way this series is extended is if Tatum goes nuts, like he did in a Game 3 win with 50 points. Even if he plays well, there are no guarantees. He scored 40 on Sunday in Game 4 and the Celtics still lost by 15.

— **INJURY WATCH:** Celtics G Kemba Walker (knee) and F Robert Williams III (ankle) missed Game 4 after playing the first three games of the series.

— **PRESSURE IS ON:** Celtics. They’ve got to find a way to slow down Brooklyn’s offense after it dumped 141 points on them in Game 4. □





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Le grand retour: Federer wins return to Paris, Slam action

By **JOHN LEICESTER and SAMUEL PETREQUIN**

PARIS (AP) — They feted Roger Federer with as loud as applause gets from a crowd capped at 1,000 people in Court Philippe Chatrier — when he walked out with a wave, when he hit one of his 48 winners, even when he attempted a back-to-the-net 'tweener and hit the ball out.

This match bathed in sunshine Monday meant Federer finally was back at the French Open and back in Grand Slam action and he gave the excited fans what they wanted perhaps as much as he did: a victory.

Federer's first competition at any major tournament in 16 months ended with him on the right side of a 6-2, 6-4, 6-3 score against qualifier Denis Istomin at the French Open as fans chanted "Roger! Ro-ger!"

It was a case of many happy returns — and serves, forehands, backhands, volleys and drop shots, too.

"What a pleasure to be back," Federer said.

Announcing a stunning departure was Naomi Osaka, who said the best thing would be for her to withdraw from the tournament. The four-time major champion said on Twitter she has suffered long bouts of depression since winning the 2018 U.S. Open.

Osaka had earlier declared she would not speak to the media during Roland Garros and was fined \$15,000



Switzerland's Roger Federer plays a return to Uzbekistan's Denis Istomin during their first round match on day two of the French Open tennis tournament at Roland Garros in Paris, France, Monday, May 31, 2021.

Associated Press

after she skipped the post-match news conference following her first-round victory Sunday.

Federer showed no signs of rust or trouble with the right knee that needed two operations last year. He produced more than twice as many winners as his 20 unforced errors and never faced a break point while improving to 8-0 against Istomin over their careers.

"Always great to be on court with this legend. To play against him is always a big (deal)," Istomin said. "I was expecting all the spectators to cheer for him." They sure did, with one voice from the stands shouting, "A delight, Roger! A delight!" as Federer went up 4-2 in the third set.

Federer, whose 40th birth-

day is Aug. 8, hadn't appeared on the Grand Slam stage since Jan. 30, 2020, when he lost to Novak Djokovic in the Australian Open semifinals.

This was just Federer's second trip to the French Open since 2015. In addition to last year's absence because of the knee issues, he withdrew in 2016 citing a bad back, then sat out the clay-court circuit each of the next two years to focus on the grass-court portion of the season.

He acknowledged recently he has zero chance of claiming the trophy this time around in Paris; instead, he is hoping to tune up his game to be ready to challenge for a championship at Wimbledon, where play begins in late June.

"In a way I like this situation — that I don't know what's next, how my next match will be. I don't even know who I play, to be honest," said Federer, whose second-round opponent will be 2014 U.S. Open champion Marin Cilic. "I take it round by round, match by match."

After rhythmic clapping accompanied Federer's trot to the baseline for the match's opening point, he got off to the perfect start against Istomin, who is ranked 204th and now is the owner of a seven-match Grand Slam losing streak but did upset Djokovic at the 2017 Australian Open.

Federer used a drop shot to earn a break point in the opening game, then converted it with a forehand winner, before holding to go up 2-0.

Just 1 1/2 hours later, it was over for Federer, who won the 2009 French Open for one of his 20 Grand Slam titles.

He shares that men's record with rival Rafael Nadal, who is scheduled to

play his first-round match Tuesday to open his bid for a 14th championship in Paris and tiebreaking 21st major overall. Djokovic also is slated to make his debut on Day 3 of the clay-court tournament.

Serena Williams, who has 23 Grand Slam singles titles, was scheduled to play later Monday in the first scheduled night session in French Open history.

Bianca Andreescu, the 2019 U.S. Open champion, departed in the afternoon with a 6-7 (1), 7-6 (2), 9-7 defeat against 85th-ranked Tamara Zidansek of Slovenia.

"I prepared super, super well for this tournament," the No. 6-seeded Andreescu said. "That's why to me it's very disappointing, because I thought I could go far."

The reigning women's champion, Iga Swiatek, picked up right where she left off last year: running yet another opponent this way and that in a 6-0, 7-5 victory over her best friend on the tennis circuit, Kaja Juvan.

Swiatek, who turned 20 on Monday, is attempting to become the first woman since Justine Henin in 2007 to win consecutive French Open titles. Swiatek did not lose a set at Roland Garros last year.

"She didn't give me any birthday gifts," Swiatek said of Juvan, with whom she won a gold medal in doubles at the Youth Olympics in 2018.

Daniil Medvedev proved that perseverance pays, finally winning a French Open match on his fifth attempt. The second-seeded Russian, twice a runner-up at other majors, beat Alexander Bublik 6-3, 6-3, 7-5, after starting 0-4 for his French Open career. □



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